

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Strengthening Intelligence Operations

Morton Halperin's article "How Reagan Can Improve the Intelligence Product" (op-ed, Feb. 5) calls for comment.

According to Mr. Halperin, permitting intelligence agencies to spy on Americans would divert them from the real threat, the KGB. Has he never heard of Rosenberg, Greenglass, Martin, Mitchell, Dunlap, Lee, Boyce, Kampiles, Barnett, to name only a few?

Mr. Halperin urges the complete separation of the clandestine intelligence collection function from the rest of CIA, which would become solely an analysis agency. In fact, during the early days of the CIA, there was, for all practical purposes, just such separation, and it didn't work.

Mr. Halperin tells us there should be a

new intelligence coordinating position in the White House. This is pretty much what the NSC staff already does. But if he means an intelligence czar to rule over the community, it has been often considered and always rejected. Such a czar would be a head without a body, having no resources of his own.

Mr. Halperin thinks that special emphasis should be given to scholarship and analytical capabilities. Indeed the intelligence community has long benefited from the work of outstanding scholars. But even the best scholars can't suck facts out of their thumbs, and without the red meat of fresh and reliable factual reports, the analysts don't have much to chew on.

To be sure, we need both good scholars and good spies. But spies are a lot harder to come by than the scholars, especially in these days when we can't give them adequate security protection. And if Mr. Halperin wants to strengthen our intelligence effort, let him step forth and support those legislative measures, which he has heretofore been so active in opposing, designed to protect intelligence sources, methods and identities.

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McLean